

# 2003 Report of Accomplishments Snohomish Conservation District



## Natural Resource Improvements in 2003 - Summary

- Improvements in water quality, detailed from tribal and county monitoring data, show an overall improvement in fecal coliform in the Stillaguamish watershed.
- Riparian plantings were completed on 21 sites totaling 19 acres of native tree and shrub plantings.
- Three fish stream improvement projects were completed involving culvert removal and bridge placement.
- Four landowners received assistance with wildlife and wetland habitat improvements. See photo at right.
- SCD has a water quality monitoring program in place to gather data on changes in WQ in areas where Best Management Practices have been implemented.



## Mission of the Snohomish Conservation District

Snohomish Conservation District's mission is to work cooperatively with others to promote and encourage conservation and responsible use of natural resources.

## Water Quality Implementation

- On the Aya Walksfar farm near Oso, 1,000 feet of use exclusion fencing was installed with an average 50' buffer on Swede Heaven Creek to keep horses out of the salmon stream. SCD cost-share funded a Roof Runoff Management system. Aya planted over 2,000 trees and shrubs with her own money along the stream and is coordinating with neighbors to solve a drainage problem affecting her property by creating a wildlife wetland area with many partners. Aya and her family the SCD 2002 Wildlife Farm of the Year.
- A Roof Runoff project designed for Emerald Glen Farms involved many large buildings, conveyance lines and a catch basin. Previously, water ran off the barns into a large manure pile and livestock paddocks. Initially a small project, it proved more difficult due to hidden underground slabs (three deep, see photo), concrete remnants and old conveyance lines on the historic dairy farm property. For SCD engineers this was one of the most difficult retrofits. DOE funds were also used to assist with waste storage and riparian plantings on this farm.
- SCD staff completed the following water quality practices on small farms: 83 acres of Brush Management, 18,436 feet of Fencing, 23 acres of Filter Strips, 3276 feet of Fish Stream Improvement, 48 acres of Heavy Use Protection, 306 acres of Planned Grazing Systems, 22 acres of Range Seeding, 68 Roof Runoff Management systems, 43 acres of Use Exclusion and 17 Waste Management systems.

## Basic Funding

- In 2002, SCD leveraged basic funding to receive \$474,000 from Snohomish County, \$10,000 from Island County, \$312,000 from DOE and IAC, and \$8,000 from USFWS to fund technical assistance and BMP implementation.

## Local Funding

- Using Snohomish County funding, SCD was able to recognize the efforts of cooperators who have installed BMPs and are examples of model farms for our landowners to view. SCD also conducted 202 site visits, 73 BMPs were installed, and 31 farm plans were written.

## Puget Sound/Water Quality

- On the Weber farm on the north fork of the Stillaguamish, 1945 trees and shrubs and 2000 willows were planted entirely by 95 volunteers who donated 420 hours!
- 130 volunteers provided labor to plant 950 trees and shrubs on four riparian sites, 16 pieces of Large Woody Debris (LWD) were placed in a wetland adjacent to a stream.
- SCD Engineering staff assisted Drainage District 7 in King County in obtaining ESA approvals from USFWS and NOAA Fisheries for \$300,000 in proposed pump station modifications.
- The Engineering team finalized and stamped 34 designs for small farm, dairy, and in-stream projects with a variety of funding sources and provided technical assistance to 56 cooperators.

## Watershed Conservation/Habitat Restoration

- **Riley Slough** - The Riley Slough Restoration Project was a significant accomplishment. Over the course of four years, 13.25 acres or 2.84 miles of the 6-mile slough were restored to native riparian habitat. SCD surveyed 11 fish passage blocking culverts and replaced 3 with recycled concrete bridge slabs. SCD worked with 10 landowners to

complete this work. Water quality monitoring at 6 sites was completed monthly for 3 years. As grant money is available, additional blocking culverts will be replaced and additional riparian habitat restored. Salmon Recovery Funding Board and Department of Ecology Funding was used to implement these projects.

### **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)**

- SCD installed two new project sites and signed-up three additional sites for 2004 implementation.
- Currently, SCD has a total of 11 project sites with three additional pending. We have a total of 124.3 acres enrolled along 5.85 riparian buffer stream miles.
- **Project Highlight:** Dale Reiner enrolled 81 acres into CREP, a total of 2.86 stream miles along the Skykomish River. (Photo at right). This outstanding progress by a single landowner signifies an important commitment to habitat restoration.



### **Dairy**

- **Plans** - During this period, one new waste management plan was written, six plans were approved, and 15 plans were certified. Nutrient management guidance was provided for 3,604 acres. In addition, 4 DNMP's were modified as needed based on changes in herd size and acreage.
- **On-The-Ground Improvements** - SCD dairy planners, engineers and NRCS staff worked to complete the following projects: 13 waste transfer systems, 6 waste structures, 2 waste storage ponds, 3 Roof Runoff Management systems, and 2 Underground outlets.
- **Workshops** - 60 people, from 26 dairies, attended SCD's 'Dairy Summit' to inform farmers of upcoming issues in nutrient management as well as worked with WSU on a Dairy Nutrient Management workshop to assist farmers with understanding nutrient plans, the nitrogen cycle and whole-farm nutrient management.

### **Small Farm Programs**

- O'Neil Project completed in 2002 and includes: heavy use area protection, roof water management, and an underground outlet. The project is located on 5 acres near Harvey Creek, which is an important tributary to the Stillaguamish because of native salmonid populations and a tribal fish hatchery. Part of the project was on the top of a benched area above a stream that ran into Harvey Creek. Sediment traveled down slope before installation of the heavy use area and the water management system.
- Resource Management plans will protect 637 acres of land. Farm planners are also involved with stream restoration on farms, critical area protection, confined animal operations and their requirements with an active and public information program that offers classes and tours to residents.
- SCD small farm staff worked with the Henning family farm which had been a DOE violation farm and, through hard work and perseverance, the farm became a 'model farm' for 2002. The farm is available for tours so that others can view environmentally friendly farm practices.

### **Community Collaboration & Coordination**

- In August 2002, SCD cooperated to identify potential fish passage blockages on Riley Slough.
- SCD sponsored an economic buffer survey titled 'Economic Analysis of Riparian Buffers on Selected Stillaguamish Farms' to help farmers and agencies understand and evaluate the economic impact to landowners from buffers.
- SCD and WICD were awarded a DOE Centennial Clean Water Fund grant to promote and implement Agricultural BMPs in Island County. This joint project was conceived because of the overlap of the two districts in Island County. The two districts are coordinating by sharing staff and equipment.

### **Information & Education**

- 45 Island County residents participated in 4 classes for small farm landowners in Spring 2003 to introduce them to Best Management Practices and water quality issues.
- SCD wrote and received a grant to purchase environmental education materials and classroom teaching aids.
- 12 people took advantage of the 'Horses-for-Clean-Water' workshop for commercial equine facility managers in Stanwood. SCD staff set up booths at five area fairs and festivals, and at a Farmlink event. A noxious weeds workshop was held in Fall of 2002 with 25 participants.
- An Open House was held to recognize outstanding cooperators and highlight district achievements.

### **Conservation Plant Sale**

- Over 75,000 trees, shrubs and perennials were distributed at the SCD plant sale in Monroe. The plants are sold at a modest price to enable purchase native plants for restoration, reforestation, erosion control and wildlife habitat enhancement. SCD uses sale proceeds to fund staff time for the sale and for our environmental education program.